LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of Left Unity

Founded 1921 Editor: R. Palme Dutt

THE COMMUNE AND TODAY

The Editor

FIGHT THE TORY TRADE UNION BILL

Alan Sapper, Michael McGahey, Bob Wright

WOMEN'S LIBERATION

Audrey Wise

POLLUTION

John Moss

MARCH 1971

20p

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LABOUR MONTHLY

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Notes of the Month

THE COMMUNE AND TODAY

'When the Commune of Paris succumbed to the atrocious massacre organised by the defenders of "Order", the victors little thought that ten years would not elapse before an event would happen in distant Petersburg which, maybe after long and violent struggles, must ultimately and certainly lead to the establishment of a Russian Commune.'

MARX and ENGELS, to the Chairman of the Slavonic Meeting, March 21, 1881, in celebration of the anniversary of the Paris Commune.

'The Commune which was thought to be forgotten, the International which was thought to have been destroyed once and for all—they are among us and alive and twenty times as strong as in 1871.'

ENGELS, Greetings to the French Workers on the 21st Anniversary of the Paris Commune, *Le Socialiste*, 26 March, 1892.

'The thunder of the Paris cannons awoke from deep slumber the most backward strata of the proletariat, and everywhere gave a stimulus and reinforcement to revolutionary socialist propaganda. That is why the cause of the Commune is not dead; it lives to this day in each and every one of us.
'The cause of the Commune is the cause of social revolution, the cause of complete political and economic emancipation of the toilers, it is the cause of the proletariat throughout the world. It is in this sense that it is immortal.'

LENIN, 'In Memory of the Paris Commune', *Rabochaya Gazeta*, April 15, 1911. *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, p.143.

March 15, 1971

Across the span of a century the imperishable inspiration of the Paris Commune, the first victory of working class power, and the portent of the future age in which we live, proclaims its message to us in the new, complex and far more advanced stage of the struggle today. Forty-six years were to pass before that first brilliant breach in the old class society, the demonstration which for the first time in history revealed the working class holding power for seventy-two days in a foremost world capital, was succeeded and transcended by the second working class conquest of power, no longer in a single city for seventy-two days, but over one-sixth of the earth, and successfully holding power now in the fifty-fourth year of advancing strength and achievement, with the extending range of new socialist states, national liberation and transformation of the world. During all these years March 18 has been honoured all over the world by the international working class movement, also during those four and

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a half decades by generations of pioneers who had carried forward the fight without living to see the further triumphant fulfilment in 1917, and since then all the more as the great precursor of October. Has this celebration of the Commune and the October Revolution been merely the recalling of past events remote from the realities of the present day? No. A thousand times no. Our celebration of the Commune and the October Revolution is our affirmation of the present and the future. It is our inextinguishable affirmation that the revolution lives and will conquer.

Western Europe and Revolution

'The difference today,' wrote Louise Michel, the indomitable heroine, exile to the penal colony of New Caledonia, and survivor of the Commune, in her preface of 1896 to her vivid and moving history *La Commune*, 'is that then it was above all France which was awakening; today it is the world.' This anniversary of the Commune is indeed a salutary reminder at the present day when the abysmal ignorance of all the current fashionable scribes, Kremlinologists and learned pundits of the capitalist world invariably label the conception of the working class revolution and conquest of power or dictatorship of the proletariat as a 'Russian' conception unsuitable for the conditions of Western Europe. The original model for this conception in practical life was first born in the heart of Western Europe, in Paris. When Engels wrote in 1891

> Of late the Social-Democratic philistine has once more been filled with wholesome terror at the words: Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Well and good, gentlemen, do you want to know what this dictatorship looks like? Look at the Paris Commune. That was the dictatorship of the proletariat (Engels, March 18, 1891, Introduction to Marx's *Civil War in France*)

he was not referring to Russia, but to Paris. His scornful reference to 'the Social-Democratic philistine' bit so effectively beneath the skin of his target that the German Social-Democratic leadership shamelessly censored his words in the first publication of the text and substituted 'the German philistine'. This textual alteration of Engels's words for publication showed how already then some of the leading higher official quarters of the Social-Democratic movement, while at that time still proclaiming allegiance to Marxism, shrank from the sharp revolutionary cutting edge of Engels's own words, when used not just in generalisations or abstractions, but in relation to living, concrete contemporary events.

East and West

When the Bolsheviks subsequently directed their political endeavours to draw the lessons of the experience of the Commune,

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and to apply the Marxist teaching of the working class revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat to Russian conditions (a development already foreshadowed by Marx and Engels in their later years) they had to meet the charge brought against them by their critics that this Marxist teaching of the dictatorship of the proletariat was only suitable for Western Europe, not for Russian conditions. Now the wheel has come full circle. After the experience of the victory of the revoultion has proved the Bolsheviks in the right and their critics in the wrong, the tune has been changed, and the Marxist teaching of the dictatorship of the proletariat is treated as a 'Russian' conception unsuitable for West European conditions. This attempt to deny the universal world significance of Marxist theory, developing its concrete forms of fulfilment in accordance with specific national conditions, has been carried a further stage forward in recent years. The extension of Marxist conceptions and influence in Asia and Africa and the world of national liberation has given rise to the hostile argument by reactionaries in these countries that the Marxist theories were only applicable to European countries, such as Russia, Germany, France or Britain, but not to Asian and African countries. History has once again been proving by practice the fallacy of these arguments. Lenin already nearly half a century ago envisaged the new forms which would arise in the application of Marxist theory in the concrete conditions of these countries:

> Our European philistines never even dreamed that the subsequent revolutions in Oriental countries, which possess much vaster populations and a much vaster diversity of social conditions, will undoubtedly display even greater distinctions than the Russian revolution (Lenin, *Our Revolution (Apropos of N. Sukhanov's Notes)*, Jan 17, 1923, Vol. 33, p. 480).

Marxism-Leninism has proved itself a world theory in the historical experience of the modern era.

Internationalism

'The flag of the Commune is the flag of the World Republic.' Such was the declaration of the Commune on March 30, 1871, within less than a fortnight of its establishment, when it confirmed in office the foreigners elected to the Commune. Not the least of the present lessons of the Commune for us today was its living embodiment of the principle of proletarian internationalism. 'Ours is the road of internationalism,' declared the Hungarian worker Franckel, one of the foremost members of the Commune, 'and we must not leave this road.' Foreigners of many nationalities then in Paris played their active part in the Commune. Two of the ablest

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generals of the Commune were Polish exiles who had been leaders of the Polish rising of 1863, Dombrowski (who died from wounds in Montmartre) and Wroblewski. The Russian-born Elizabeth Dmitrieff organised 'The Union of Women for the Defence of Paris', and was in communication with Marx. The official report to the National Assembly in 1875 stated that of 36,309 arrested after the Commune had fallen 1,752 were foreigners, including 110 Poles, 81 Germans, 27 Englishmen, 23 Russians, 17 Americans and one Irishman. Two-thirds of a century later this international participation was demonstrated in a new situation in the role of the International Brigade in Spain. The signatories of the General Council of the First International subscribing to Marx's immortal Address, written within a fortnight of the fall of the Commune, *The Civil War in France*, represented a range of different European nationalities. The personal link of the past and the present found expression in the role of the veteran Camélinat, member of the First International, of the Commune and of the Third International, at whose funeral in 1932 the Communist municipality of Saint-Denis replaced the name of the Rue Thiers by the name of the Rue Degeyter, the composer of the music of the Internationale, whose words were written by a member of the Commune, Pottier.

From Bismarck-Thiers to Hitler-Pétain to Home-Munich to Heath-EEC

In contrast to this fraternity of proletarian internationalism the experience of the war of reaction against the Commune revealed the true face of the champions of bourgeois nationalism. This experience has been demonstrated again and again throughout the ensuing century. Loudly proclaiming themselves national patriots, and denouncing the Communists as traitors, they become suddenly transformed, at the next throw of the dice, into governments of national betrayal. Ready to go to war with their rival exploiters in a conflict of interests over the loot, they proclaim such a war a sacred war of national defence for which they despatch without compunction millions of workers to their deaths. But the moment the class war takes precedence, and the workers revolt, they join hands with their erstwhile enemy exploiters in a common alliance against the working class revolution. So Bismarck and Thiers joined hands against the Commune. The victorious invading Prussian armies, which dared not enter Paris for fear of the workers, provided protection for the counter-revolution organised by Thiers from Versailles, and released French prisoners of war to become the armed forces of Thiers, raising the permitted level of the armies of

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Thiers from 22,000 to 40,000 to 150,000. So once again in the first world war already before the armistice German and British military co-operation developed in the Baltic region against the Russian revolution. In the second world war Pétain, after the decrees excommunicating the Communists and banning their MPs and their press, opened the front to the advancing Nazi armies and welcomed Hitler to enter Paris. At Munich Chamberlain, with Home as his assistant, and Daladier joined with Hitler and Mussolini to betray Czechoslovakia, and Benes preferred to surrender to Hitler at the behest of the West rather than save the independence of Czechoslovakia by the aid of the Soviet Union. Today Heath and Home are busy selling Britain to the Common Market, in a deal estimated to cost Britain over six hundred million pounds on the balance of payments, but justified on the grounds that the decisive argument in favour is the 'political' argument for 'European unity', i.e. the unity of capitalist Europe against socialist Europe.

Barbarities of Counter-Revolution

Eleanor Marx in a letter to a commemoration meeting on the 22nd anniversary of the Commune in 1893 described her experience in 1871 of the 'frantic fury of the whole middle class against the Commune. . . . It was proposed—quite seriously—that the Communards who had taken refuge in England should be handed over to the doctors and hospitals for purposes of vivisection. Perhaps exceptionally brutal in form, this proposition nevertheless largely expressed the feelings of the whole of respectable society.' She recalled the 'horrible pontoons' or prison hulks pressed into service for arrested Communards; between June and September, 1871, some 20,000 were crammed into 25 of these floating hells. She recalled 'the awful plain of Satory', which was the French Aldershot near Versailles; thousands of Communard prisoners, mainly women, were herded onto an open parade-ground where they 'lived' in sun and rain, sleeping in the mud, jeered at over the walls by the Versailles swells; close by the firing squads were ceaselessly at work. The official figure of the Communards massacred by the Versailles regime was 30,000; Louise Michel estimates that the true figure would be nearer 100,000. Here also the Commune was the precursor of the modern era. Not until the White Terror in Finland and Hungary and Germany and other European countries after the first world war and the massacres by Nazism were these barbarities of counter-revolution, first demonstrated in the crushing of the Commune, repeated on an even more extreme scale in our era.

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Lessons of the Commune

Every attempt was made by the organisers of the Versailles counter-revolution to cover up their infamies by attributing infinite stories of atrocities and horrors against the Commune. The account we publish elsewhere in this issue by a non-political middle class Englishman (the Harrovian author of *Forty Years On*) who was accidentally in Paris during the Commune, gives a very different picture of the real conditions during the Commune and on which side the atrocities lay. The real weakness of the heroes of the Commune was that they were too gentle, too anxious for peaceful fulfilment of the desire of the masses of the working population for a happier existence, too unready to anticipate the brutal offensive of counter-revolution from Versailles. So far from a plot to seize power, they were taken by surprise by the evacuation of Thiers and the forces of reaction from Paris in order to make war on Paris from Versailles; the Central Committee of the National Guard, finding themselves thus in the position of responsibility for Paris, hastily sought to legalise the position by holding elections to establish the Commune. So far from attacking Versailles from their position of strength, they waited for Versailles to attack Paris. So far from striking at the economic basis of the bourgeoisie, they solemnly respected the sanctity of the Bank of Paris. When the butchers of Versailles proceeded to massacre all prisoners of war from the Commune, they took hostages and repeatedly threatened to take the lives of these hostages if the men of Versailles continued to massacre prisoners, but delayed fulfilment of this threat until the last stages.

Drawing the Lessons

Marx, who had warned beforehand against precipitate action, knowing the political unpreparedness and confusion of the popular forces, immediately organised a full international campaign of support once the battle was joined, while at the same time in private letters laying his finger on the points of weakness which involved the danger of defeat.

> History has no like example of like greatness! If they are defeated only their 'good nature' will be to blame. They should have marched at once on Versailles after first Vinoy and then the reactionary section of the Paris National Guard had themselves retreated. They missed their opportunity because of conscientious scruples. They did not want *to start a civil war*, as if that mischievious abortion Thiers had not already started a civil war with his attempt to disarm Paris. Second mistake: the Central Committee surrendered its power too soon, to make way for the Com-

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mune, again from a too 'honourable' scrupulosity (Marx letter to Kugelmann, April 12, 1871).

Not the least precious heritage of the Commune lies precisely in the negative lessons of the mistakes and weaknesses which characterised this first working class conquest of power. These lessons were drawn and studied with infinite care by Lenin and the Bolsheviks in the preparation of their revolutionary strategy and tactics: the rejection of Blanquist premature attempts at insurrection, or Proudhonist confusionism; the need of efficient central leadership through a political party of the working class based on Marxism and trained in democratic centralism; the need of political preparation to build up adequate mass influence before striking the decisive blow; the need to take the initiative, the moment the time is ripe, and strike with full force; and the need to take effective measures to defeat the assault of counter-revolution. On this basis the success of the working class conquest of power was achieved through the Bolshevik revolution, and this power has been successfully maintained against every limitless assault of world reaction to emerge stronger than ever today after fifty-four years.

Socialism Triumphant

This month the twenty-fourth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union will signalise the new records of achievement and adopt the plan for the new and ever-more fruitful paths of advance of the first socialist society in history, now further pioneering ahead in the beginning of the development towards the aims of communist society. The report of the outcome of the last two five year plans has shown that during this decade of the sixties the output of steel which in 1921, after the ravages of war and civil war and the wars of intervention, had fallen to 5 per cent of the low 1913 level of 4¼ million tons, has soared from 65 to 120 million tons; of oil from 148 to 371 million tons; of gas from 47 to 211 thousand million cubic metres; and of electric power from 292 to 790 million units. The achievement in agriculture was reviewed in the article in last month's issue. The painful contrast of the record of Britain in the sixties is manifest. This multiplication in the output of material goods, unparalleled in economic history, has not meant, as in the periods of fitful and far from comparable growth in capitalist countries, the piling up of profits for a narrowing circle of giant monopolies, alongside ups and downs of mass unemployment and regions of mass poverty and blight in the midst of affluence, but the continuing advance of the social conditions of the entire people because they own the means of production and enjoy the fruits of

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their labours. During the five years since 1965 real incomes have risen by a third, and 55 million people—almost a quarter of the population—have moved to new and better homes. Not a Soviet propagandist, but the US Department of Commerce associate Allan Bates, specialist in housing construction, expressed the conclusion in his Report drawn up in April 1969: 'The Soviet Union is the first and only nation which has solved the problem of providing low-cost housing for its mass of citizens.' All this, which is still only a relatively early stage of development compared with the future of communism, has been possible because, in the words of the TUC General Council delegation report of 1924: 'In Russia the workers are the ruling class.'

Rolls-Royce Parable of Modern Capitalism

In contrast with this record of socialist achievement, the spectacle of modern capitalism today reveals deepening contradictions, not merely in spite of the marvels of productive advance brought about by the scientists and technicians and workers, and described as the scientific and technological revolution, but precisely because the scale of this revolution of the productive forces is beating against the outworn fetters of capitalist property relations. Like a parable of modern capitalism the elaborately engineered collapse of the Rolls-Royce emblem of British manufacturing prestige, with shares tumbling to a few pence, and millions robbed and masses of the nation's most skilled workers thrown out of employment, together with the Tory Government's conjuring trick of partial, temporary nationalisation of the unprofitable parts in an elaborate Anglo-American poker game in relation to the also financially-threatened Lockheed giant, have revealed the characteristic situation*. There is no question of the unsurpassed skill of the scientists and technicians designing the RB 211; but the scale has reached beyond the compass of the existing structure of the giant monopolies and banks, and renders imperative public ownership of the entire aerospace industry for it to become possible for the new inventions to operate. This is characteristic of the whole stage reached today by modern super-monopoly capitalism, straddling across national frontiers, and at one moment using existing states as counters in their game and at the next having to be rescued by state power. Delay of the socialist revolution, so far from representing the moderate,

* The irrepressible gladiator of ultra-reactionary Toryism, Enoch Powell, referred in the parliamentary debate to the spectacle of 'a Tory Government proclaiming that a loss-making concern should be nationalised so as to turn it into a profit-making enterprise so that it would be returned to private enterprise.'

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gradual, evolutionary path of progress as it used to be presented, is more and more manifestly revealed as the path of deadlock, danger, and destruction.

Inflation Plus Unemployment

During the inter-war years the productive advance forced forward by the ruthless rationalisation offensive found its outcome in mass unemployment and the world economic crisis which almost shattered the fabric of capitalism in the consequent political storms; indeed, the chronic depression was only ended by the spurious 'solution' of the second world war. After the war the rulers of capitalism, fearful in face of the advance of the socialist world, and concerned at all costs to prevent a return to the dangerous mass unemployment of the inter-war years, threw overboard the old financial orthodoxy and adopted the previously heretical Keynesian nostrum of deficit-financing to stimulate temporary artificial booms of production and employment. This of course is a recipe for inflation. In contrast to the chronic depression and mass unemployment of the inter-war years, the characteristic current course of modern capitalism has been a continuous process of inflation, directly provoked by government policies and spending, and then blamed on the workers when the well-organised sections try to overtake the rise in prices. Inflation has become so established that the spokesmen of official circles, of the financiers, government ministers and economists refer nowadays to a 'reasonable' rate of inflation as 3 per cent a year, and only complain of it as 'excessive' when it rises above that. But while the effect of inflation is cumulative and tends to accelerate, large-scale unemployment has now begun to develop alongside inflation. In the United States the official figure of unemployment has passed the five million mark. Fearful of the political consequences, with the prospect of the 1972 mid-term election, President Nixon has proclaimed himself a convert to Keynesian principles and has announced a budget with a planned deficit of the colossal total of £4,830 million. Despite all the promises to achieve by this means 'prosperity without inflation' this latest gambler's adventure is likely to give additional impetus to the course of inflation in world capitalism, alongside the developing conflicts over tariffs and markets, and between the rival blocs as revealed in the relations of Britain, the US and the Common Market.

Britain Storm-Centre of Capitalist Crisis

Britain, the classic land of capitalism, is today the heart of the crisis of capitalism. Here inflation has been endemic throughout the

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post-war quarter of a century, and has accelerated during the most recent phase. Successive Governments, Conservative or Labour, while proclaiming the aim to deal with it, have failed to arrest its course, because it is these Governments' own policies which have been the main operative cause of inflation. Britain emerged from the war with a weakened economy and requiring to concentrate resources on economic reconstruction. But all the post-war Governments have been determined to sacrifice everything to maintain Britain as a world power; to maintain a vast military expenditure comparable as a proportion of the national income with that of the wealthy US, and double that of France, while Germany and Japan were free of such costs; to maintain an overseas military role when there were no longer the old colonial troops to carry it out or colonial budgets to pay the costs; and to pour out a ceaseless flow of vast overseas capital investment, even in years of deficits, in order to rebuild and surpass the old overseas capital accumulation. The result was not only the chronic deficit on the balance of payments, but inevitable inflation.

Extending Cycle of Inflation

From this governmental starting point of inflation the whole cycle extends, through the government measures to combat the deficit, the credit squeeze, increased taxation, rising interest rates and costs, and in consequence of these conditions the sharpening wage struggles.* After the ruthless offensives of the Wilson Labour Governments in 1964-70, through the wage freeze, heavy increased taxation, devaluation and a host of accompanying measures to convert the deficit at £800 million on the balance of payments into a surplus of £600 million, the new Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced that it will be necessary to squander the surplus of £600 million in order to enter the Common Market, and to provide in addition for the current rate of private overseas capital investment running at £6-700 million a year. (Chancellor Barber, speaking to the Overseas Bankers Club, February 1.) Such is the logic of insanity

* The enlarging circles of the process of inflation, credit squeeze and more inflation, were illustrated when the Greater London Council announced on February 10 an increase of 32 per cent for the rates on Outer London Boroughs and explained that, 'the biggest single increase' was £10 million for capital construction costs, since the normal raising of capital costs by loan would involve a ruinous 10 per cent in interest. The old normal rate of interest of 5 per cent on a gilt-edged security becomes 10 per cent 'to allow for inflation', with the result that the municipalities decide to raise capital out of current taxation—much as if the finance for constructing Britain's railway system had been sought by raising fares from Darlington to Stockport. This would have sounded lunacy to a Victorian capitalist, but this lunacy has become the practice of modern capitalism.

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of the present phase of British capitalism now brought to an extreme climax by the Heath Tory Government.

Working Class Vanguard of the Fight

In this situation the present fight of the organised workers on the wage front, against the Tory Trade Union Bill and against the Barber cuts offensive, so far from being a fight for 'sectional interests' against the requirements of 'the nation', as the Tory propagandists pretend, is the forefront of the fight for the vital interests and needs of the masses of the entire British people, and for the future of Britain, against the disastrous policies of present day capitalism and its Tory Government. The army of organised trade unionists and their families represent the majority of the nation far more genuinely than the Tory Ministers or the Whip-tied cohorts returned through an electoral system designed to hamper the effective expression of the will of the people (as strikingly demonstrated over the Common Market issue). The strength to compel acceptance of the will of the people is there. The numbers are there. The capacity to fight has been proved in all the preliminary encounters which have been in progress. What is essential is unity of policy, and determination to deploy the full strength that exists in united action. Hence the critical importance of the Special TUC due to be held on March 18. The Engineers have shown the way forward with their official decision for 24-hours token strikes on March 1 and again on March 18. The General Council has embarked on a vast campaign to educate rank and file trade unionists on the evils of the Tory Trade Union Bill. This is admirable. There is also need for rank and file trade unionists to conduct a campaign to educate the General Council on the need to utilise the strength of the organised movement to compel the Government to withdraw the bill. March 18, 1971, is the centenary day of the Paris Commune. Let it be marked by a new advance in the battle of the British working class in the front ranks of the international working class. **R.P.D.**

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MEET THE EDITOR

R. Palme Dutt, the Editor, and R. Page Arnot, the Associate Editor, will welcome readers and contributors whose loyal support has made possible this Golden Jubilee Celebration.

Tickets to include Buffet Supper and Bar Facilities are available at £1.25 from the '50th Anniversary Celebration Committee', Hon. Sec. A. F. Papworth, 87 Eton Hall, Eton College Road, London, N.W.3.

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The Fight Against the Tory Trade Union Bill

(1) HORSE TO TIGER

Alan Sapper
General Secretary
Association of Cinematograph,
Television and allied Technicians

THE Industrial Relations Bill is only part of the generalised Tory attack upon the working class of this country. Britain's scuttling into the Common Market, Barber's mini budget and the recent acceleration of the destruction of the profitable parts of the nationalised industries are equal parts of the same attack.

The Conservative leadership are also afraid of the increasing militancy and expansion of trade union membership and are particularly concerned about the growing awareness of trade unionists' recognition of the political realities of the day to day fight for better wages and conditions. Therefore, the Government have had to take direct action against their most potent enemy, the trade union movement. The tragedy is that the movement doesn't realise its own strength. It only examines its weaknesses. The TUC General Council must be convinced that they must lead a truly united movement in an outright attack against Government policy.

The TUC campaign is being expertly presented and backed up by a hard working machine, but the guts are missing. It *is* necessary to educate and explain the effects of the bill to as many workers as possible, and to do this you need the facilities of the TUC. It has occurred to some members of the General Council to ask: 'Suppose the campaign, as we all hope it will be, is a success, that it converts the majority of affiliates to being not only aware of the bill but against it, and then let us presume that their families and friends are also of this opinion. What follows? How will their conversion defeat the bill?' This question has not been answered. To change opinions is one thing but to change an attack into a defeat of the attacker is another.

However, it is pointless for anybody in this situation to suffer from delusions, for it is apparent that a large number of trade unionists are not at this moment of time ready to take outright unlimited industrial action without the backing of a united movement. Strong leadership will have to be given to create the unity required. The conviction of the TUC General Council will need the maximum

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participation of members to make their own unions press for the TUC to lead positively.

The March 18 Special Congress will be an opportunity for the affiliated unions to express their views. Even if Congress does insist (without definitive instruction), for more militant leadership this may not be enough. The whole campaign of education being conducted at the moment will have to be turned into one of militant propaganda. Time will not be on our side, and in fact never is, and therefore we must be prepared to intensify the fight against the enactment of the bill, and if that bill becomes law to continue the fight for its repeal.

There are fundamental steps that can be taken by the General Council without any basic change of the present policy. The mass media have ever since its inception carried on a continuing vilification of the trade union movement to such an extent that we have many members who have swallowed the propaganda against their own, without a second thought. It is therefore necessary to ensure that whenever there is an anti-trade union programme or the slick clever use of derogatory adjectives used against trade unionists or their actions there must be protests to the broadcasting authorities and letters to the press. The TUC should organise a panel willing to

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LABOUR MONTHLY FORTY YEARS AGO

Capitalist Offensive and Working Class Unity

The ruling class are now engaged in re-forming their front in order to return to the attack with redoubled ferocity. The attack extends to every section of the working class. Over five million workers are directly affected by the offensive against wages organised by the Employers' Confederation which is also shamelessly demanding a 33⅓ per cent cut in unemployment benefit. The Government endeavours to conceal its complicity in this attack for fear of undermining its prestige, but the pressure of the crisis compels it to fling aside the mask as Snowden did in his notorious speech demanding 'drastic and disagreeable measures' and announcing a programme of all-round cuts in wages and unemployment benefit. This threat is backed by the new Trade Union Bill, the strike clause of which goes even further than the Baldwin Act of 1927.

Against the capitalist offensive the united front of the entire working class must be built up. To overcome the isolation of the various sections of the working class, especially the division between the employed and unemployed, and to knit the sectional struggles into a general class action of the workers must be our main strategical line.

(From 'The Workers' Counter-Offensive', by William Rust, *Labour Monthly*, March 1931.)

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monitor all television programmes on a continual basis. These monitoring reports would be fed to the TUC so that the necessary complaints could be made. We should insist at least on a fair balance of exposure on television and radio. Part of the internal propaganda against strike action has been the fear that this would only enhance the Tories' propaganda that trade unions are destructive and an enemy of the state, and they may very well call a snap election and be returned to parliament with an increased majority. This argument doesn't really add up, for if capital fears that its viability will be in jeopardy by continuing strike action and that industry could be disrupted and therefore profits disappear, it will ensure that the bill will not be enacted and therefore the necessity for a snap election will disappear.

The discussion on the bill, its motivation, its political context have been expounded in this journal and others, and many trade unionists are getting confused. Those who are naïve, politically, cannot understand the call for what they term 'the political strike' or 'political action'. The need to explain that there is little difference between action against the employer and against the Government takes a great deal of time, for all manner of counter-arguments are used to avoid facing reality.

At the majority of meetings one attends, the argument against militant action is that the TUC hasn't called for it; in fact they declared against it. That is why a campaign to convince the TUC to lead in a practical sense is a priority. We must also seek an absolute undertaking from the General Council that there will be no co-operation with any of the arms of the Industrial Relations Bill if it becomes law, no nominees to the National Industrial Relations Court, the Industrial Tribunals, Commission of Industrial Relations, no registration of all the TUC affiliates, the publication of a detailed exposure of the contradictions within any act, a campaign to explain to trade unionists how to avoid the act's provisions, and above all the act not to be isolated from the general political and sociological and economic attack against our movement.

As a matter of priority we must show the physical hostility to the bill and also continue the attempts to unify the various wings of our movement: the fear of an undisciplined internal wrangle developing must be overcome by personal and corporate discipline. The specially convened Congress on March 18, although called in many people's opinion too late, must be used to maximise the pressure through the affiliated unions on the General Council of the TUC to swop the cart-horse for a tiger.

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(2) TRADE UNIONS OR ?

Michael McGahey
President
National Union of Mineworkers (Scottish Area)

THE present generation of trade unionists will find it difficult to remember a period in which so many rank and file members have been brought into action. The effect of the campaign against the Labour Government's policy *In Place of Strife* created a confidence in the ability of the movement to change Government policies. They will remember the doubting Thomases who, during the early period of 1969, told us it would be impossible to change Government policy, who ridiculed the idea that a special Trades Union Congress could be forced upon the General Council, and who refused in those early days of 1969 to utilise the full power and strength of the movement, including industrial action. But nevertheless history will record that those who pioneered the concept of an all-out struggle against the Government in order to defeat *In Place of Strife* and maintain the trade union movement in this country, and gains so dearly won by previous generations, have been proven correct, and have not only demonstrated the need for trade union freedom, but that the struggle itself was part and parcel of the fight of the democratic forces in our country.

No one can approach the Tory Industrial Relations Bill of 1970 without establishing that it was right-wing Labour who laid the concept for the Tories to operate. It is hypocritical of Wilson and Castle to whine about the Tory proposals and talk of a constructive alternative when their constructive alternative itself—*In Place of Strife*—would also have crippled the movement. That is why rank and file activity today is so important, to bring into action millions of workers who possibly for the first time have come into forms of activity, and from which they will derive many important lessons.

It is not the intention of the author of this short article to make a clinical analysis of the Tories' Industrial Relations Bill. That has been amply done by many experts. Material galore is sweeping through the movement. All the dangers of the bill have been spelt out and the need for its defeat is unanimously accepted in the movement. Of the host of material that has been published there is *Reason* by the TUC, Dr. V. L. Allen's pamphlet *Defeat the Bill* issued by the Scottish Miners, and Bert Ramelson's pamphlet *Carr's Bill and How to Kill It* issued by the Communist Party. The

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Labour Research Department has also provided a wealth of material which requires study. But the key fundamental question facing the movement is how to kill this bill and how to refuse to allow the Tories to place it on the statute book. How can the movement achieve this end?

We are told by Ted Heath and Harold Wilson that parliament is sacrosanct, that no effort must be made to utilise industrial strength in order to usurp the power of parliament. Many leaders of the TUC have declared against the use of industrial action. There is nothing original in this theory.

Here we have the classic example of Tweedledum and Tweedledee in the form of right-wing Labour and the Tories in unity to deprive the workers of their legitimate right to take strike action to defend not only their living standards, but their right to be trade unionists. The acceptance of this philosophy would leave the workers fighting with one hand tied behind their backs, and to some extent powerless in face of an inbuilt Tory majority in parliament.

This theory of the right wing is at complete variance with the history of our movement. The pioneers of the Labour Party warned the trade unionists at the end of the last century that it was not sufficient to fight industrially and leave the political field to the Liberals and the Tories. They fought for the concept of a working class party based on the trade unions in order that the workers could fight with two fists—the political and industrial.

Having established that, we are now told by certain trade union and Labour leaders only to fight in parliament and not to use our industrial strength. This philosophy must be challenged by the whole movement. The organised trade union movement of this country, in alliance with the left political forces that are emerging, can and will kill this bill. The efforts of the TUC in developing what they term an educational campaign, while important in itself with the mass rallies and conferences, must be given a new ingredient, and that is the use of the strike weapon for the purpose of maintaining and advancing trade union democratic rights.

This policy of industrial action is gaining ground. Sections of the movement are now speaking out and many sections of trade unionists are coming into action. In February 1969, over 150,000 workers were on the streets. It is significant that on December 8, 1970, over half-a-million workers went into action and, by January 12, 1971, this was on an ever-higher scale. This movement must be carried forward and Britain must see the biggest demonstrations of trade unionists this country has ever witnessed in order to drive

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home to the Tories that the millions of working men and women, organised as trade unionists, will refuse to give up their rich democratic heritage.

In the course of this struggle one cannot ignore the powerful wages movement that is developing with sections of the workers refusing to be bludgeoned into non-activity by the false theory that increased wages is the cause of inflation. Wilson may squeak about one man's wage increase being another person's price increase, but the fallacy of this can be seen with the ever-growing increases in prices at the expense of the workers in this country.

That is why the struggle against the Industrial Relations Bill is part and parcel of the wages movement. The basic aim of the Tories is to cripple the trade unions as they see them as the main bastion of democratic opposition to their reactionary policies. This is no mad scheme thought up by some backwoodsman of the Tory Party, but is in fact part and parcel of their whole strategy to place the burden of capitalist crisis on the shoulders of the workers.

No sooner were the Tories elected in June 1970, than they went on to the offensive, first against the school children, robbing them of school milk and increasing the prices of school meals, pushing up health service charges, attacking education, and in fact attempting to dismantle the welfare state and rob the workers of such limited gains as they were able to achieve in the post-war period.

They also attacked the nationalised industries by hiving off the cream to their backers in private enterprise. The strategy of the Tories is quite clear: to ensure the redistribution of wealth in this country in the interests of privilege, and to deny the sick, the disabled, the aged and the young reasonable and decent standards.

One thing stands out, and that is that the Tories recognise the power of the labour and trade union movement to thwart their intentions. Hence, in order to carry forward their policies, they must attack the democratic organisations of the working class, and their first effort is the trade unions. This in fact is an attack on democracy.

The proposals of the Tories can never operate in a democratic society, but in fact lay the basis for the emergence of a corporate state. Therefore, there can be no retreat on the part of the trade unions and labour movement. All forces and all forms of action must be brought into operation to ensure the defeat of this bill. It is in the course of this action to defeat the bill, and also to expose many of the harmful theories in the Labour movement, that we can create the conditions for a new democratic advance, with the left forces taking

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the leadership, creating the conditions for ending a Tory Government, and providing the political climate for the emergence of a new type of Labour Government which will carry forward the policies of the labour and trade union movement: extended public ownership; the redistribution of wealth to ensure higher living standards for workers and pensioners; the creation of conditions for greater educational opportunities for our young people; full provision for the sick and disabled; an end to profiteering at the expense of the people, and thereby the establishment of a platform a step closer to a socialist society.

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(3) THE TORY ONSLAUGHT

Bob Wright
Executive Council Member
Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers

THE labour movement and organised labour in the trade unions face an onslaught launched by the most vicious and ruthless Tory reactionary Government that we have seen in this country for the past fifty years. At a time when the socialist forces in Britain have been advancing their standards, reaction and right-wing Conservative forces are compelling a policy within the Tory Party and the Government which must ultimately create a massive reaction from organised labour and the labour movement. If ever a time had arisen where we must unite to defeat the Tories, irrespective of policies which divide us, I believe this is the time.

My union, the AUEW, at the initiative of the Executive Council of the Engineering Section, with the support of the executives of the other sections, presented a policy statement to the special conference convened on February 4, which calls on the union's Executive Council to launch a series of one-day stoppages and to seek support from the TUC and all unions therein. It further laid down a challenge that if, in spite of the organised resistance of the workers, the Tories passed the bill, and it became an act of parliament, the TUC should adopt a policy of non-co-operation, based on the refusal to register by all unions as a condition of affiliation to the TUC; resistance against the erosion of trade union organisation; resistance to victimisation; that all agreements must have a clause indicating that they are not

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legally binding; no co-operation of any trade union or labour representation on boards or courts or panels connected with the bill in any way whatsoever, and that the TUC organise a central fund for the defence of trade unions and trade unionists.

It was a reaction to the declarations on behalf of the TUC General Council that no strike or dispute should be entered into to resist the bill, and a response to unofficial rank-and-file activity and pressure within the organisation and from most activists within the trade union movement for an official lead to be given in resistance, together with the campaign already launched by the TUC.

The demonstration on February 21 and the stoppages will show organised determination to defeat the bill and, indeed, to nullify the act if it becomes law. Every trade unionist can only be called into participation at that stage on the basis of active resistance and in the knowledge that they fought to resist the evils of the Tory bill.

This bill can only be described as placing organised trade unions and their members in chains as part of an overall Tory plan to condition the workers of Great Britain to a continuance of a low wage policy and to erode social services and other conditions and prevent the workers obtaining wage increases to combat deliberate policies of the Government to force up the cost of living and create massive unemployment. This is why every worker, every organised trade unionist, must recognise and urge his own union to join with the AUEW and other unions in a series of one-day stoppages which underline the struggle against the bill.

I have referred to the Tory onslaught against the standards of the working class of this country. This has already been launched. The Tory policies on deflation must inevitably lead to a depression of our industrial capacity, and Rolls-Royce is an illustration of the impact of lack of planning and social ownership in an industry which is basic to our future and our economy.

Indeed, the whole aircraft industry now must be seen as an industry which, if the policies already indicated continue, will gradually grind to a halt with bankruptcies and repercussions throughout large sections of the engineering industry. This must inevitably affect industries which employ some 240,000 workers. Couple this with the attacks on the public sector and the declarations of the government ministers that profitable sectors of the nationalised industries will be hived off and sold, no doubt at bargain prices, to the speculators of the Stock Exchange and the City. This will leave the remaining sections of the nationalised industries vulnerable to attack and discrimination, and will underline the Tory propaganda

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that public industries cannot succeed. The Tories will not, of course, want to sell to their friends in the City those sectors which are nationally essential and cannot be put onto the altar of capitalist speculation.

International companies, large business cartels, with tentacles in Europe and America and other parts of the western world, are looking for 'rich pickings' as a result of the crisis which faces western capitalism. The plea that we are facing world problems is now becoming a phrase used by private industry in negotiations in numerous industries, and trade unionists cannot accept that the workers' standards should suffer as a result of those crises which are inevitable under the capitalist system.

With five million unemployed in America, with rising unemployment in Britain (now 700,000), at the present pace it would not be idle speculation to suggest the probability of one million unemployed within the next twelve months. This does not mean that the large business cartels will not continue to reap large profits from their investments, but they are prepared to sacrifice many small investors, and certainly small business ventures, in their crusade to hold back the advance of the working class and the power of organised labour. Don't let them ever delude us into believing that they have any regard for the national economy. Many illustrations have been clearly given of their complete insularity in this direction.

Referring to public ownership in Britain, as industries they reflect the very character of a capitalist economy because they are a minor sector of the total economy. Labour politicians must stop talking about a mixed economy: Britain has never had a mixed economy and is, in fact, a capitalist country with the profit-motive as the spur to any venture undertaken. The Tory Government's dedication to the withdrawal of capital in the risk industries can only lead to a withdrawal of capital in those industries, the vital industries of this country, and it will encourage the investment of capital in the soft, easy, speculative markets where quick profits are the order of the day, with little risk in long-term investment.

I firmly believe that we must as a movement re-establish the ideals which were spelt out clearly within the rules of the unions and, in fact, within the philosophy of the labour movement, that the people must ultimately take under their control the means of production, land and inherent wealth, and develop those assets in the interests of the community and the people of the country. Without these basic principles we will fall victim to the pressures and philosophies outlined by the Tories.

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POLLUTION

John Moss

PRESERVATION of the environment from further pollution by man has become a public issue in industrial countries. Committees for European Conservation Year were graced by the remaining crowned heads and, in Britain, by the Duke of Edinburgh. Their presence was both a sign of increased ruling class concern and an assurance to big business polluters that nothing very harsh would be done to curb their effluents or their profits.

Although the same hunting, shooting and fishing types were prominent at ECY events, the difference this time was that on the one hand the wealthy are beginning to find their own previously exclusive preserves and playgrounds polluted and on the other wider sections of the people than ever before are expressing genuine concern about their environment and organising themselves to work on it in amenity organisations and through other activities.

In the nineteenth century, the Duke of Bedford was able to oppose successfully the building of the Euston Road half a mile from his house because the dust generated by the new road in the heat of the summer would have been intolerable. This shows how the well-to-do protected themselves from pollution at a time when hundreds of thousands of Londoners lived in areas filthy with smoke, in overcrowded slums and suffering the worst sort of environment that unbridled capitalism could produce.

Professional pundits of preservation upbraid the working class in general and the trade unions in particular for taking too little interest in preserving the environment. The responsibility for the desecration of the countryside is entirely that of the ruling class; the working class is not in charge. These critics are disappointed when, for example, Communist and Labour shop stewards at ICI Billingham support the chemical monopoly's demand for a new reservoir at Cow Green in Upper Teesdale, on the grounds that it will help to ensure work, rather than the pleas of botanists and others to preserve rare violets and other plants that survive precariously in such remote mountain areas and are drowned by industry's thirsty demands.

This attitude of the shop stewards should be measured in relation to the background of the industrial revolution and its aftermath

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that has left today more than a million slum houses, nineteenth century schools, and lives restricted by the paucity of amenities in many mining villages and towns where one basic industry prevails. As Joe Roeber wrote in the *Times* (November 15, 1970):

> Passionate letters are written about Concorde by people who cannot imagine—and would not tolerate—the noise pollution of the average factory worker's life. The conditions under which a large part of the population of almost any industrialised country lives are, by any measure, heavily polluted.

In these circumstances, the first job of the unions has been to defend their members' lives and health and it is to their credit that unions have pioneered health measures in factories, foundries, mines and elsewhere as well as being major campaigners for improved housing and other social services. In this way unions have fought valiantly to improve the quality of life and the environment of millions.

Yet there are signs that what is afoot today is more than a middle class preservation movement. Indeed the success of such movements in diverting the proposed third London airport from Stanstead, in proposing a route for the M40 across the Chilterns to avoid spoiling the best views and in campaigning against the onward march of high voltage electricity pylons from Hadrian's Wall to the South Downs has encouraged wider sections to join in the demand for the preservation and improvement of their quality of life.

Young people in this country are following the example of young Americans in joining protest movements, which in the United States have so slowed down the building of power stations that a major energy shortage looms in New York and other industrial areas.

Never slow to make the fast buck, honest or otherwise, American big business firms have set up their own environmental sections to boost sales, and profits, of anti-pollution products. Shares of firms making air conditioning and other equipment to control interior environment of buildings, fans, electrical precipitators, and so on are booming. Children's games 'Smog' and 'Dirty Water' have been produced and in Britain children have tidied up litter in the school playground all the more willingly because the teachers have called the process an anti-pollution project.

Some of the worse polluters have spent considerable sums on publicity and propaganda to prove that they are the greatest friends of the environment. One such company, Potlatch Forests Inc., an Idaho timber company, advertised itself with a coloured advertisement of a blue river flowing peacefully between mountains of evergreens. The picture caption read: 'It cost us a bundle, but the Clearwater River still runs clear.' But the Wall Street Journal found that

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the beautiful scene was actually 50 miles upstream from Lewiston, Idaho, where the company has its pulp and paper plant. The river that runs beside the plant receives 40 tons of organic waste daily and, by Potlatch's own admitted figures, the plant discharges to the atmosphere two-and-a-half million tons of sulphur fumes and nearly two million tons of smoke a year. According to Alistair Cooke in the *Guardian* (December 28, 1970) 'of all the industrial polluters in the United States, Potlatch was the only one noxious enough to be singled out for Federal hearings on air and water pollution.'

The American administration has been accused of dragging its feet over court actions against industrial undertakings suspected of causing pollution. President Nixon's new administrator of the Environment Protection Agency, Mr. William Ruckelhaus, a former Assistant Attorney General, said in December, after his appointment, that he had found only one air pollution suit had been sent to the Justice Department from the Department of Health Education and Welfare and added: 'I intend to find out why.'

At home, there is the same foot-dragging and hypocrisy. Practically the first decision of the new Secretary of State for the Environment, Mr. Peter Walker, was to overrule his own inspector's recommendation against a new brewery in a country site near Salmesbury, Lancashire. No wonder the brewers so often bless the Tory Party with donations. Yet the latest report of the Countryside Commission, a body with overall responsibility for ten national parks and 27 areas of outstanding natural beauty covering some 17 per cent of England and Wales, reveals that it has a current budget of only £515,000 and a staff of 81.

It could be argued that the present despoliation of nature by man's activities is a continuation of what has happened before. Man cleared the once fertile crescent of the Middle East to develop agriculture and created deserts, the rich forests of England were cut down to smelt iron, and the Scottish Highlands were ruthlessly cleared of people for sheep farming and as game preserves.

The pace and scope of man's use of natural resources have enormously accelerated as the population has vastly increased. The first wave of great changes in the last century, built on coal and iron, has been overwhelmed by an avalanche of world scale changes based on the much greater combined energy sources of nuclear energy as well as on the fossil fuels of oil, gas and coal. Railways and steamships have been joined by many forms of transport on land, sea and air. These produce waste and various forms of pollution in the air and

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water, as well as noise, and have led to serious environmental accidents such as Torrey Canyon and Aberfan and deterioration of life in parts of many cities.

As Frederick Engels wrote in *The Dialectics of Nature:*

> Let us not, however, flatter ourselves overmuch on account of our human conquest over nature. For each such conquest takes its revenge on us.

He continued, in the brilliant chapter on the part played by labour in the transition from ape to man:

> Thus at every step we are reminded that we by no means rule over nature like a conqueror over foreign people, like someone standing outside nature, but that we, with flesh, blood and brain, belong to nature, and exist in its midst, and all our mastery of it consists in the fact that we have the advantage over all other creatures of being able to know and correctly apply its laws.

In the previous periods in history man, while developing his technology, has lived more in harmony with the world he was shaping. But this was possible because there were fewer people and nature's abundant resources had hardly been tapped. There can be no return to such a position. The *Observer* recently (January 3, 1971) put the conservationist view:

> The earth cannot much longer support an expanding species that tries to get rich by living recklessly off capital resources while excreting its wastes into any convenient hole. Our soaring growth curves and a healthy global environment are totally incompatible; our survival depends on paring our demands and expectations to the finite capacities of spaceship earth. To translate this message into political terms without penalising the poor everywhere will be a formidably difficult task—perhaps the greatest challenge of the next decade.

The rub is in the last sentence—for poor read the developing two-thirds of the world as well as those starved of a decent environment for too long in industrial countries like our own. The solution cannot be found in a capitalist society which resists measures to curb pollution until forced to act and then passes the price of such measures it installs on to the consumers, to the people. The problem is not primarily technological but political and we can expect a better solution in socialist countries where the productive forces unleashed by technology stand more in harmony with the social organisation of society. This means knowing and correctly applying not only natural laws, but those discovered about the operation of human society, first by Marx and his collaborator Engels, whose warning is as clear today as when it was written.

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A BILL OF RIGHTS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Sean Redmond
Executive Council Member
Connolly Association

THE recent announcement by Lord Carrington, Secretary of State for Defence, that the British army in Northern Ireland is to get a new weapon to deal with 'rioters', highlights the policy of the Tory Government. Traditionally the Tories have relied on brute force in Ireland, and now the creative minds at the Ministry of Defence have worked overtime to add to the armoury of batons, CS gas, rubber bullets and water cannon. Bearing in mind the present climate in Britain, it would be a grave mistake for the labour movement to stand on the sidelines and watch Northern Ireland become the testing ground for weapons of suppression.

If only the Irish were ever satisfied. After all, they have been promised reforms in the six counties. Did they ever seriously expect the promises to be fulfilled? This is the guts of it. The magnificent struggle for civil rights in Northern Ireland has not been without success. The squalid set-up can no longer be covered up. But the reforms to date have been of a minor nature, and the main demands of the civil rights movement have not been met. Hence the continuation of the campaign. The Tories and their pals in the Northern Ireland parliament at Stormont are desperately anxious to create the impression that Northern Ireland is moving towards a new era of justice for all but is being impeded by the extremists. The big lie is followed by the use of the big stick. Needless to say this confidence trick is particularly angled towards the British public.

It would be a mistake to ignore the signs that sectarianism seems to have increased. Against a background of high unemployment and bad housing, it has been easy for right-wing Unionists to fan the fires of old controversies. It must be emphasised that this is not a religious problem. Religion is used for a political purpose, which is a different thing altogether.

What then is required? Ultimately there must be a united Ireland. In the immediate future Northern Ireland needs economic assistance to banish unemployment, a crash housing programme, and civil rights for all without delay. If the Tories refuse to face up to the root causes, the labour movement must. It is clear that the Unionists

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are unwilling to democratise the area. Some might insist that the Chichester-Clark administration is a prisoner of the right wing and is unable to do more. But whether they are incapable or unwilling, it adds up to no reforms, other than a few scraps, and an abundance of pious remarks.

Northern Ireland is Westminster's problem. This artificial state was set up by the Westminster parliament. It was a botched job which has not worked, so the ball must be played back into the Westminster court. Let those who made the mess clear it up! In the summer of 1968 the Connolly Association called on the Labour Government to introduce a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland at Westminster. This was before blood was spilt on the streets of Belfast and Derry. But Mr. Wilson declined to take decisive action. This is now the main demand of the civil rights movement, and is more valid than ever.

What is meant by a Bill of Rights. The 'state' of Northern Ireland was created by the Government of Ireland Act, passed at Westminster in 1920. In addition to establishing a parliament in Belfast, the Act also defines the powers of that parliament and administration. It sets out the matters on which Stormont may, and may not, legislate. It is in fact described as the 'constitution' of Northern Ireland. The proposal of a Bill of Rights is simply that the Government of Ireland Act should be amended and civil rights be written into it. They would be inserted into the 'constitution' of the area. If this could be won, civil rights would no longer depend on what the Tory Unionists doled out, according to the degree of pressure exerted on them. Nor could reforms won now be taken back when the heat is off.

The campaign for a Bill of Rights has taken a major step forward with the publication of a draft bill in the *Irish Democrat*. The draft is in parliamentary form, and steps are being taken to have it presented in the Lords and Commons. It will be appreciated that there is no constitutional obstacle. All that is being asked is that the Westminster parliament should amend one of its own acts.

Section one of the draft bill reads: 'The Race Relations Act, 1968, is hereby extended to Northern Ireland.' This is followed by a clause extending the Act, in its application to Northern Ireland, to deal with religious discrimination. Some moves have been made in Northern Ireland in this field, including the setting-up of a Community Relations Commission. But legislation to outlaw all forms of religious discrimination is not included in the reform programme.

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In the field of electoral reform, the demand of 'one man one vote' in local government has been promised, but local government elections have been postponed from 1970 to 1972, at the earliest. This is to allow a reconstruction of local government units. It is widely held that there are to be fresh gerrymanders. At present there is a deplorable situation. In the county of Fermanagh, for example, although the supporters of the Unionist Party are in a minority in the county, they hold no less than 34 of the 50 seats in the county council. It was for involvement in a parade to protest against this injustice that Mr. Frank McManus, Civil Rights MP for Fermanagh-Tyrone, was jailed for six months. The parade had been banned under Stormont's repressive legislation. The draft Bill of Rights would result in Stormont and local government elections being held on a proportional representation basis with each constituency returning no fewer than four seats.

The most blatant abuses are contained in the Special Powers Acts. These Acts violate two-thirds of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The repeal of these Acts is not included in the so-called reform programme, although this was recommended in the Hunt Report on the police in Northern Ireland. The Special Powers Acts are the right arm of the regime in stifling their political opponents.

Section five of the draft bill declares: 'On and after the appointed day the Parliament of Northern Ireland shall cease to have powers to legislate in respect of the following matters . . .' The section then goes on to list the provisions of the Special Powers Acts, including the suspension of Habeus Corpus, imprisonment without charge or trial, the prohibition of meetings and parades, and the arming or maintaining of any group of special constabulary.

The draft concludes with a section which would give the Northern Ireland parliament power to enter into direct discussion with the Government of the Irish Republic, 'with a view to the eventual establishment of a parliament for the whole of Ireland.' At present Stormont does not have this power. The point should not be missed that the enactment of such a bill would not only give civil rights the force of law, but it would present the Irish people with a path towards the reunification of their country.

At the present time within Britain signatures are being collected on a petition, addressed to the Prime Minister, which calls for a Bill of Rights. It is intended that this should be presented in conjunction with a lobby of parliament on March 24. A similar petition is being taken up in Northern Ireland by the Civil Rights Association.

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To date the following organisations are among those who have adopted this demand: the National Council for Civil Liberties, the Movement for Colonial Freedom, the Communist Party, the Society of Graphical and Allied Trades, the National Union of Railwaymen, and the Sheetmetal Workers' Union. The campaign will go on after March 24. This issue must be raised at trade union conferences, and at this year's Trades Union Congress. At a time when the Tories are determined to let the army 'sort-out' Northern Ireland, the labour movement must tell them that it is not on.

YOUNG TRADE UNIONISTS— NEXT STEP

Steve Marsling

London Secretary
Trade Union Youth Conference Committee

LENIN wrote his pamphlet *What is to be Done?* a good while ago but those same words must be on the minds of all those people who were involved in making the February 7 conference the great success it was.

The conference itself showed that the young delegates who attended were proud of belonging to a trade union and, whilst the majority felt that the unions were not giving young people a fair deal, they realised that only by fighting in their unions could change be brought about. Among the many things demanded was a national minimum adult rate of £16 10s. at 18, further education and training without loss of earnings during working hours, six weeks paid holiday for all those aged 18 and under, and equal pay for work of equal value for girls. Next debated was the question of young peoples' rights within the trade union movement and first on the list was the demand that the TUC convene an annual youth conference, and to have youth sections at every level of the movement, though again in no way would these youth sections be in opposition to the adult sections, indeed they can only strengthen them. The conference also demanded that these youth sections have certain consultative rights with management.

This is a fighting militant programme that can and must be taken up in every shop floor in the country. The national committee will not be sitting idle and waiting for this to happen. Local committees

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must be strengthened and in towns where there are no local committees they will have to be set up. They have two main tasks. First, to convince their friends, workmates and passers-by of the need for our demands and for a youth TUC, and to arrange factory gate meetings at factories and offices where large numbers of young people work. Second, to make a nuisance of themselves (!), to convince every union branch in their town, the trades council, the co-op member and everyone else that we are a determined force with justifiable grievances. Money must be obtained for leaflets, both for recruitment to the local committee and for agitation, highlighting what we are fighting for; these should not just be distributed inside factories but outside the football grounds and dog tracks.

Pressure must be put on trades councils to establish youth trades councils. Young workers in the AEF (Engineers) and DATA (Draughtsmen) who already have junior workers' committees should press the executives of their unions to campaign on our demands. Articles from young workers should flood into the offices where union journals are printed. The left wing will recognise the common sense and justice of our demands and will get caught up in the fire of our enthusiasm, and the right wing will stir into action for the sake of some peace and quiet and to get us off their backs!

A national petition is to be launched calling for a youth TUC and our other demands. We must aim for maximum support if it is not to end up in Vic Feather's waste paper basket. Days of public action as from Saturday, March 13, have been called for. In at least five towns demonstrations followed by rallies will take place and this will be kept up until the mass youth lobby that will flock into Blackpool on Monday, September 6, to lobby the TUC.

The local committees should use their initiative in all cases where young workers have grievances in their place of work and encourage them to fight for better conditions. The time when the apprentice was the tea-boy, the floor-sweeper, and the semi-skilled worker after his five years, the lad who signed indentures banning him from striking, and making him do compulsory overtime, compulsory shiftwork and pay for night classes are on the way out. Just look at the figures: 23,000 less people attend day release than they did in 1965, 35 per cent of all school leavers went to a job with no training at all and only 23 per cent had the chance of an apprenticeship. All this in the 'white heat' of the technological revolution. We all want a trade union movement with teeth in it. I believe that involvement of young workers can ease the 'teething' that has already begun and

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make these teeth really come to life. A regular publication is to be launched soon which will keep the whole of Britain in touch with how the struggle is going on in local areas (liaison committee, please note).

These are some of the ideas we have for future action. If you have any yourself, then write and let us know. Most of us are brand new in the trade union movement and need the help and guidance of experience—as long as it is not 'I had to go through it, so why shouldn't you?' A stagnant approach will lead to stagnant unions. The mass of young people today are becoming increasingly cynical towards our society. If they are not to see trade unions as just another 'con', then the movement must act now and fast. The future of socialist policies could well depend on it.

WOMEN'S LIBERATION

Audrey Wise*

ON International Women's Day, March 8, the traditional day agreed by the whole international socialist movement since 1910 for the cause of advance of women's emancipation, this year sees significant new stirrings and currents which are finding expression in the various forms of the Women's Liberation movement. There may often be some confusion in the forms of expression, but what they are striving for is very important and needs to be understood.

Women's liberation includes equal legal rights, equal pay and opportunity, but it implies much more. It is not a struggle to stand alongside men in a man's world. It is a struggle to change the whole structure of society, to be equals in a world fit for human beings. Many of the seemingly backward women who have failed to be moved by the 'equality' demand have looked at their husband's lives and have felt distinctly uninspired. Slaving over a hot stove—or in a hot foundry; the kitchen sink—or the overhead line in the car factory, not such a great distinction between them, is there, except that he is head of the house and she a more lowly appendage. Even those usually termed middle class see their husbands often engaged in a rat race which is not very appealing either.

However, working class women more and more find that anyway they are working both in the home and in employment. Though being

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spared the most physically arduous of the men's jobs, we are nevertheless forced by economic necessity to take employment which is most often unskilled or semi-skilled, badly paid and monotonous. Where our work requires more skill (secretarial, hairdressing) it tends to have a service element which relates to women's traditional role. Women with older children, completely unable to make ends meet on the wages of one breadwinner, are in employment in large numbers. They often find it a relief to have some human contact outside the family, and some money of their own 'rather than asking him for every penny'. So more of these women are coming to see that since they are spending many years in employment they might as well try to get better wages and conditions. The equal pay agitation which developed from the strike by the Ford women sewing-machinists in 1968 was very much a product of this feeling.

It is not true that women will not join trade unions. This is a favourite taunt, particularly by right-wing trade union leaders who find it handy to have an excuse for their own deficiencies (especially in trades like distribution). In fact, very little attempt is made to recruit women into membership and still less into activity, and the trade unions behave as though they are 'working men's associations'. Sometimes there is even discrimination by rule. AUEW women shop stewards, for instance, can represent only women, whereas men shop stewards can represent both men and women. Nevertheless, two million women are trade unionists. But they play almost no part in taking decisions. It is very easy to find women in shops and factories, but they are much scarcer in trade union meetings, and they are rare jewels indeed in influential positions in the unions.

Women are quite often militant. They tend as well to be more interested than men in the actual working conditions, cleanliness, ventilation, hours of work, rather than just wages. This is very important, because it foreshadows a latent interest in controlling their own work situation, rather than accepting being cogs in the machinery. Women are used to being subordinate, but they are also used to some element of 'self-management' in their household activities at least, and we are now at a time when 'worker's control' and 'self-management' are going to come more to the fore as essential demands to counter-attack the fascist development being pushed by the Tories.

But even when militant, women find themselves almost always being represented by male union officials who are very frequently right-wing and steeped in bureaucracy to boot. So women get to

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feeling that union activity is not for them. Of course, the answer seems easy. Get into union decision-making. Become the 'representative' as well as the 'represented'. But there is an immense problem facing working women—the double job. They are joint breadwinners, but largely single-handed homeworkers. 'But we help in the home,' say you men indignantly. You mean you dry the dishes, perhaps, sometimes. The fact remains that it is not regarded as normal for women to dash out to union meetings, leaving husband to feed the family and put the children to bed.

Along with the equal pay campaign by women workers, there has grown the Women's Liberation movement, drawn more (though by no means exclusively) from women from a more financially comfortable and better educated background. Close association with both these campaigns, however, has shown me that they have many things in common, and are 'sisters under the skin'. Indeed, the use of the word 'sister' is very common in Women's Liberation, just as 'brother' is found in trade unions. Many on the left are afraid of the Women's Liberation movement. They brand it as a diversion from the true path towards socialism. In this they show quite unwarranted smugness. We are not even on the true path until we succeed in involving women, in immense numbers, and in leading activities (not just as supporters, tea-makers, typists). We do not even know what the true path is, until both sexes of humanity have helped to plan the journey and choose the destination.

Much of the oppression of women springs directly from capitalist society. But let us not forget that women have been oppressed by other societies in the past, and that men of all classes take part in it at present. The fall of capitalism does not automatically mean liberation for women, unless women have helped to give it the push. Seeing the scarcity of women in the traditional organisations, noting the subordinate place taken by most of them, and then going into the new movement is like a big breath of fresh air. It is a complex movement, with different strands and many new ideas being tried out. Some of them will prove untenable and some of lasting value. It is above all else a movement in which women are gaining confidence in themselves as people, and seeing how our present society is not in fact fit for people.

An important tactic of the ruling class is to use women as a fifth column in the working class, making them believe that strikes cause high prices, and so on. In these circumstances, far from decrying Women's Liberation, the socialists should welcome this awakening and increase its influence.

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PARIS COMMUNE— BRITISH WITNESSES

Andrew Rothstein

IN 1871 the sympathies of a very large section of the British working class—as distinct from the majority of the then trade union leaders—were with the Paris Commune, and expressed themselves at a large number of public meetings,[1] as well as in the editorials on the Commune (from first to last) in the most democratic paper then available to working men, *Reynolds' Newspaper*. The origin of this feeling was the great disillusionment of the workers, whose vast demonstrations in principal cities for universal suffrage had forced the adoption by parliament of the second Reform Bill in 1867, when they discovered that they had been swindled: only 750,000 had been added to the existing million or so on the electoral roll, leaving 5,000,000 still disfranchised. The discontent was encouraged by widespread unemployment and distress, and by the associated struggle then raging to secure elementary rights for the trade unions; the steady growth in popularity of the International Working Men's Association gave point and expression to this campaign.

A good deal of this ferment was turned against the flaunting luxury of the royal family. The first months of 1871, both before and after the Commune was established by the rising of the Paris workers on March 18, saw the foundation of a large number of republican clubs, very largely composed of working men, in the main industrial centres of Great Britain. *Reynolds' Newspaper* reported, in April and May, such clubs formed at Newcastle, Gateshead, Leicester, Nottingham, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Dundee and Edinburgh.

Between February and June, Charles Bradlaugh's weekly *National Reformer* reported others set up at Middlesbrough, North Shields, Bedlington, Stratford, Warrington, Northampton, Sunderland and Grimsby; the foundation of one in London, on March 24, with nearly

[1] It is very interesting to note the agreement on this point of historians so widely separated by time and politics as Justin McCarthy (*Short History of Our Own Times*, ch. 25) in 1901, S. Maccoby (*English Radicalism*, ch. 11) in 1938 and Royden Harrison (*Before the Socialists*, ch. 5) in 1965; as well as, of course, in the letters of Marx and Engels.

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100 members—nearly 200 by the end of May—was given special prominence. The leading newspapers, moreover, furiously denounced the movement.

It has long been known that a number of middle class radicals, more or less experienced in politics, supported the republican movement, and some of them—particularly Professor E. S. Beesly and Frederic Harrison—supported the Commune.[2] But there is also evidence that—as in our own times—the upheaval of opinion among the working class had its influence even in some of the innermost citadels of reaction at that time, the universities and the public schools.

On April 10, 1871—the day after a meeting on Clerkenwell Green in support of the Commune, violently attacked in the newspapers next morning[3]—H. P. Richards, describing himself as Honorary Secretary of the Oxford Republican Club, wrote to Karl Marx asking for information about the objects of the International Working Men's Association, and saying that 'if, as I do not doubt, they are such as the Club also has in view, it will endeavour to co-operate with you and other bodies in effecting them.' He also enclosed a resolution, which unfortunately does not seem to have been preserved.[4] The letter was on notepaper of Wadham College, Oxford.

Herbert Paul Richards, born in 1848, was the second son of Thomas Richards, a printer and publisher well known in London. He had gone up to Balliol College with a classical scholarship in 1867, graduated in classics with first-class honours three years later, and almost at once—in 1870—was elected a Fellow of Wadham College. (Thus it was as a junior don, not an undergraduate, that he was writing.) He remained at this post until his death in 1916, becoming an internationally known authority in Greek studies. During his undergraduate years he was a prominent speaker at the Oxford Union: at that time he was described as 'a Liberal in politics'—which covered a wide range of opinions. Later he became a Unionist. But this is not the whole picture.

For many years the Marx Memorial Library has possessed a copy of Marx's classic work on the Commune, *The Civil War in France*,

[2] Royden Harrison, *op. cit.*, gives the outstanding examples, with quotations from their letters.

[3] The meeting, and the attacks, are described in my *House on Clerkenwell Green*, p. 39.

[4] The existence of this letter was first mentioned in Valeria Kunina's valuable work, *Karl Marx and the English Labour Movement* (in Russian, Moscow, 1968), and the Marx Memorial Library is indebted to her for getting us a photocopy from the Institute of Marxism-Leninism.

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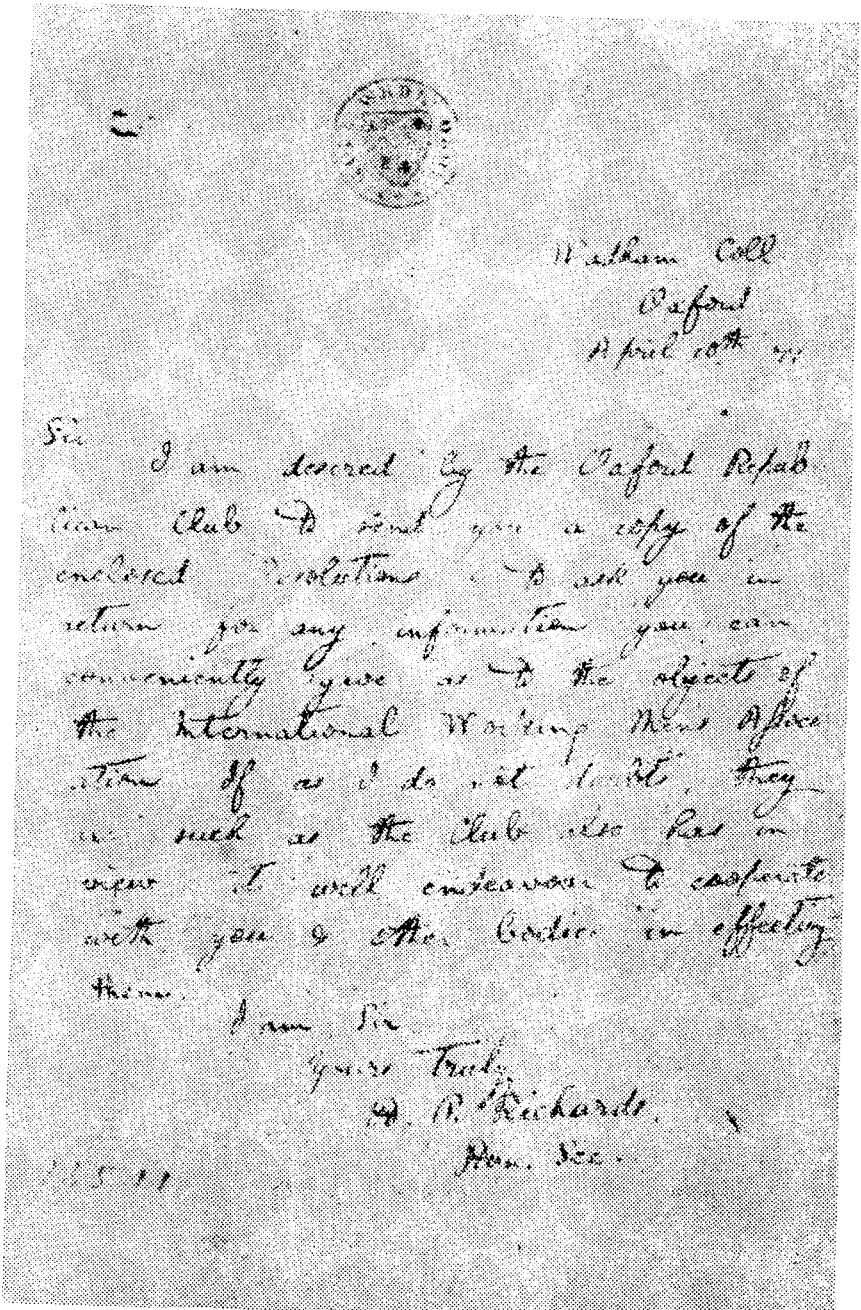

Wadham Coll
Oxford
April 10th 71

Sir

I am desired by the Oxford Reform Club to send you a copy of the enclosed Resolutions & ask you in return for any information you can conveniently give us & the objects of the International Working Mens Association. If we do not hear from you as the Club desires to know in order it will endeavour to correspond with you & other Centres in effecting them.

I am Sir
your Faithf.
W. R. Richards.
Hon. Sec.

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published in 1871. In it is a slip of paper bearing the words: 'F.T. Richards, Trin. Coll. Oxford. June 1872.' Sure enough, enquiries established that Franklin Thomas Richards, born in 1847, was the eldest son of that same printer. He had gone up with a classical scholarship to Queen's College in 1866, graduated—with the same distinction as his brother—in 1869, and had been at once elected a Fellow of Trinity, where he, too, remained until his death in 1905, except for a few years' break when he had for a time to give up his Fellowship, under the antiquated rules then existing, because of the heinous offence of getting married! He got back when the rules were changed.

He too had been an active member of the Oxford Union, and on February 2, 1871, the *Oxford Undergraduates' Journal* recorded that he had been elected to its Committee. Moreover, on March 3—*before* the insurrection in Paris—the *National Reformer*, in its answers to correspondents, gave the following reply to 'F.T.R. Oxford': 'In our next issue we will give an exact statement of the law relating to treason and sedition, showing how Republican Clubs may be conducted legally.' In a further note on April 2, this time to 'S.B. Oxford', the paper said that they could be 'safely formed everywhere', on the basis of the rules adopted by the Birmingham Republican Club (in March). And on April 30, a report from the London Republican Club, again printed by the *National Reformer*, said that 'a circular has been received from the Oxford Republican Club, whose rules are essentially the same as ours, differing only in form.'

It may be safely concluded that the two brothers played an active part in securing a majority for a resolution at the Oxford Union—after a debate, on May 18, lasting until nearly midnight, itself adjourned from a previous week's meeting—'that the conduct of M. Thiers and the Assembly of Versailles is ruinous to France and dishonour to humanity.' Thus their contact with working class republicanism had justified itself. The result was all the more noteworthy because the *Oxford Undergraduates' Journal* in a recent issue (May 4, 1871) had held up to ridicule 'the enthusiasm of our advanced young men' who, supporting the Commune, 'solemnly casting about for an opportunity of display, salute they know not what, with great profusion of red flags and alliterative odes.'

Further research might perhaps discover both the odes in question and more about the Oxford Republican Club.

Oxford, they used to say, was 'the home of lost causes'. But how about Edward Bowen, one of the most famous housemasters at

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Harrow and author of the well known *Forty Years On* and other songs? Born in 1836, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1857, and then at Harrow until his death in 1901, a Radical most of his life, Bowen spent a week in Paris with a colleague during the Commune, in mid-April 1871.[5] Immediately on his return, he wrote to his mother that the stories of robberies and atrocities were untrue:

> Paris is perfectly tranquil, well-governed, orderly . . . Everybody is unanimous (except a few of the upper classes) in hatred of Versailles . . . In fact Paris is absolutely in the hands of its lower classes, who govern it with perfect order, and without half as much violence and crime as went on before, though not a single policeman exists in the city, and not a single court of justice is sitting.

These were the impressions of a mature man of 35. Sixteen years later (October 31, 1887) he lectured on the Commune to the Harrow Liberal Club, repeating what he had written in the letter just quoted, but going much further. It was the other side, he said, who were guilty of atrocities, from the very start, not the Commune. 'Sentries everywhere were as civil as possible, and they seemed to pride themselves on showing what an army of the people could be.' The newspapers, unlike those of Versailles, did not carry 'a single word of instigation to disorder, to outrage or to cruelty'. Bowen underlined that the Commune 'was not only a movement for republican and free institutions, it was also at bottom a protest against the social system which it found existing under the Empire.' He mentioned in particular the decrees ordering workshops left idle by their fugitive owners to be handed over to associations of their workmen, forbidding bakers' night work, and the suspension of payment of rents and commercial bills. As for places of amusement 'where an honest woman might go, I believe the advantage to have been on the side of the Commune,' he added. Bowen's conclusion was that, for all the failure of the Communards, 'one thing I am convinced they did . . . they saved the French Republic' (from the huge monarchist majority in the Versailles Assembly).

Of course, Edward Bowen, the Richards brothers, Beesly and Harrison, were noble exceptions amid the hyena-like chorus which rose in 1871 from the vast majority of their class and its hangers-on. But that makes their stand all the more worth remembering.

[5] It was the late Sir Charles Trevelyan, Minister for Education in the first two Labour Governments (1924, 1929) and a true left-wing socialist and friend of the Soviet Union, who first drew my attention in 1944 to a memorial volume of 1902 entitled *Edward Bowen* (to be found in the British Museum under 10826. dd. 26). He had been in Bowen's house at Harrow.

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Fifty Fighting Years (2)

FROM MONDISM TO THE UNITED FRONT AGAINST FASCISM AND WAR 1927-1938

R. Page Arnot

THE lowest ebb tide of the labour movement, the worst period of its history for a hundred years, was marked by abject surrender (the betrayal of the general strike of May 1926) passing into a continuing policy of subjection and submissiveness to the master class by the leaders.

Meantime the British Empire, swollen to its biggest dimension of over 14 million square miles to contain and imprison over a quarter of the world's population, seemed to have reached a new, aggressive stability in the October 1926 Imperial Conference. As over most of the Empire there was a creeping agrarian crisis, so in Britain there was 'chronic crisis' in all the staple industries. Mass unemployment of a kind never known before deepened year after year until over one-fifth of insured workers were unemployed. In particular industries, especially in mining, metal and textiles, the condition of the proletariat may well have been worse than that of 'the Hungry Forties' of the nineteenth century*.

As this dreadful period began, its baleful nature was predicted and clearly recognised by friend and foe alike. Five weeks after the Tory 'Trade Union Reform Bill', which was to cripple the British trade union movement for twenty years, it was declared:

> After the years of storm a certain routine, almost an inertia, of peace is being re-established. The state of Europe in 1927 is certainly immeasurably better than it was in 1923 (*Times*, May 14, 1927).

In Moscow at the Conference of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (then riven by the open cleavage in the opposition of

* By the autumn of 1932 the proportion of insured males, aged 16 to 64, who were unemployed had risen to 26.2 per cent. In June 1932, in coal mining, 40.7 per cent were unemployed. In steel smelting, also mainly male labour, 49.1 per cent were unemployed in June 1932. In marine engineering in the same month 58.6 per cent—in shipbuilding and shiprepairing 63.5 per cent! In cotton textiles with a larger number of women employed than men, the unemployed figure had reached over 40 per cent in spinning, over 29 per cent in weaving, by September 1932. Meantime, the total number of trade unionists in the TUC affiliations fell from 4,365,619 in 1926—year by year—to 3,367,911 seven years later.

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Zinoviev and Trotsky to the Central Committee majority headed by Stalin) Nicolai Bukharin (on November 1, 1926) had deplored the widespread consolidation of capitalism—to the extent that world revolution had come to a standstill.

Preparations for war began in each capitalist country, so that when Maxim Litvinov at the Preparatory Commission on Disarmament in March 1928 put forward the Soviet proposal for the complete abolition of all armaments he was met by the stony resistance of Britain, France and the US. War preparation and colonial oppression was seen in all the continents. In January 1927, 1,000 Royal Marines left for China followed by three brigades of infantry to make up the 'Shanghai Defence Force'. In February 1927 a diplomatic note to China was followed, after three weeks, by a note to Moscow 'requesting discontinuance of Soviet interference in British affairs', preliminary to a breach of diplomatic relations. The three-quarter-witted Home Secretary, Joynson Hicks, a notorious red-baiter, launched a police raid on the headquarters of the Soviet trade delegation in London, known as Arcos, and found nothing. So after ten days the Tory Prime Minister announced the termination of the peaceful relations embodied in the 1921 trade agreement with the Soviet Union.

But of all the features and incidents of the opening months of the bad period called 'stabilisation' the most disturbing and most dangerous was the new quiescence of the British labour movement with the trade union leaders retreating before the inroads of capitalism and imperialism, and with the Labour Party misguided by Ramsay MacDonald to forsake one principle after another amid a morass of parliamentary manoeuvres.

In this period *Labour Monthly*, while continuing its close connection with the vanguard and using all its links with the organisations of the movement, refused to go along the path that was now being trodden by the leaders in retreat and took up the fight along the whole front. An increasingly critical note was sounded in issue after issue, as each backward step to forsake the cause of socialism was seen in the labour movement. A continued and a keener resistance was urged against the policies of submission.

Within many of the unions there developed a further stage where one means or another was used to break the resistance to the class collaboration policy. In particular unions this took the form of imposition of penalties, up to and including expulsion of those who led the resistance. Where Mondism and other forms of 'class harmony' were pursued there was a minority 'who would not bow

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the knee to Baal'. The most active of this minority built up their organisation of the Minority Movement, whose Secretary from 1924 to 1929 was Harry Pollitt, throughout a regular contributor to *Labour Monthly*. In each industry a drive to have the minority isolated and penalised was soon applied to all adherents of the Minority Movement. The leaders of the TUC General Council, now openly committed to a policy of collaboration with capitalism, the Labour Party chiefs and the national officials of the Co-operative movement all showed in an acute degree their envy, malice and uncharitableness to members of the Communist Party. This went so far that union constitutions in some cases were altered to create 'second-class' citizens, deprived of full rights of membership, rendered ineligible to be elected to be officers of the union. Shop stewards, branch officials, district committee members incurred displeasure wherever those who held Communist opinions (sometimes voiced in a very provocative manner) were actively trying to break up class collaboration, and win the unions back to the true path of advance.

The General Election in June 1929 gave an increased Labour vote of eight-and-a-third million, less than the Tory total of eight-and-two-thirds million, but with 288 seats in the House of Commons, against 260 Tory seats—and only 59 seats for the Liberals despite their five-and-a-third million votes. With Liberal support, the Labour Cabinet kept going the administration of British imperialism and, at its outset, continued the infamous trial of the Meerut prisoners in India. Though this second Labour Government put a stop to the 'not genuinely seeking work' stipulation for unemployment benefit, its general incapacity to deal effectively with unemployment or with the mounting financial and economic crisis was soon apparent*. By August 1931 it was considering stringent measures and severe 'cuts' affecting both employed and unemployed. The resistance against the proposals led to the break-up of the Cabinet. There was a complete betrayal of the Labour cause (just five years after the General Strike betrayal) by Ramsay MacDonald who then headed a coalition of all capitalist parties in a 'National Government'.

At the general election on October 27, 1931, the débâcle was complete. The National Government with a vote of fourteen-and-a half million triumphed over the six-and-two-thirds million voting for Labour and secured 554 seats out of 615. The Labour Party in

* A series of 'never again' condemnations of that Government were to be uttered in subsequent years by its junior ministers (such as Hugh Dalton) in their very revealing memoirs.

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parliament was 'hurled headlong with hideous ruin and combustion down to bottomless perdition', with only 52 seats—nearly half of them the staunch representation of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain.

Not only was the betrayal by Ramsay MacDonald (who followed out the path predicted for him seven years earlier in the pages of *Labour Monthly*, March 1924 issue) disastrous, but the whole Cabinet also had brought discredit upon itself to such an extent that even the supine leaders of the General Council had moved against them. The years that followed, with the cruelty of the means test adding to the blight of widespread unemployment causing poverty, malnutrition and misery to nearly a quarter of the total population of men, women and children, were a continuing calamity that demonstrated the complete bankruptcy of every successive government of capitalist Britain and 'their utter inability to govern'.

In the international field, while the progress and struggles of the labour movement in each country of the world were recorded in *The World of Labour* for a successive number of years, the main articles of *Labour Monthly* were frequently dedicated to the liberation of the colonial peoples from the yoke of imperialism. Within the Empire, the foremost need was the liberation of India. The defence of the developing Chinese revolution, where a quarter of the human race were deep in bitter class struggle, was dealt with in article after article. In the defence of the Russian revolution, with the need to portray the exact situation, both within the Soviet Union and outside it, in the preparations headed by the British Government for renewed attack on the first workers' republic, *Labour Monthly* had the advantage year after year of skilled expositions based on experience—in contrast to the mendacity of the capitalist press with its journalists sucking inspiration from poisoned sources.

It was in the middle and later twenties that the 'Notes of the Month' by the Editor-in-Chief, at that time compelled for health reasons to reside in Brussels, began to command wide attention, not only in the British Empire but also in a whole number of other countries. In Britain, the circulation, though mainly in the trade unions and in the workshops (for years, over 100 copies were sold monthly at the largest coal-pit in Fife) was found also in Whitehall (not so much in Scotland Yard as in the Foreign Office) and in Fleet Street. The special quality of the 'Notes of the Month', their skill in the application of Marxist methodology to the burning questions of world economics and world politics attracted particular attention. The appreciation of them within the international working

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class movement stood very high. In the Executive Committee of the Communist International in addition to the sixty or seventy nominations from affiliated parties three places were reserved for election on personal grounds by the World Congress of 1928. Clara Zetkin, founder in 1907 of the Women's International Socialist Congress, was proposed: Sen Katayama, founder of the Socialist Party of Japan, and famous as the proponent of peace at the Amsterdam 1904 International Socialist Congress was also proposed. For the third place, the name of R. Palme Dutt was put forward, on the motion of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, seconded by the Communist Party of Germany.

Meanwhile in Great Britain many trade union and co-operative speakers, afterwards to represent their organisations in a leading capacity, used to tell us how they based their addresses on the 'Notes of the Month', so that while Ramsay MacDonald and his cronies in the Parliamentary Labour Party were 'dis-educating' the British working class in the principles of socialism, *Labour Monthly* in the oft-quoted words of Bernard Shaw 'stepped in and kept the Red Flag flying while the Labour Party was waving a tattered old Union Jack'. In the dozen years up to 1929 the magazine was appreciated more and more intensely, rather than more widely, for virtually the whole of its contents, articles and reviews, produced by a galaxy of progressive and advanced thinkers—all of them writing for it 'without fee or bountith'. Within this Milky Way our stars differed from one another like the Pleiades or the modern 'main sequence' from hot young luminaries to the Red Giants. Categories could begin with the earliest, such as John A. Hobson whose *Evolution of Modern Capitalism* was reviewed by Lenin in 1898. Then Category B would be leaders of militant mass movements, trade unions and parties between the wars, Category C could be dubbed 'the University Wits' (to borrow the name of Shakespeare's contemporary Cambridge playwrights). Category D would be the League Against Imperialism founded in 1927 in Brussels. Category E, revolutionaries from Europe. Category F, United Front. Category G, *Sui Generis*.*

Category A Robert Dell, Havelock Ellis, John A. Hobson, Tom Mann, Ben Tillett.

* In addition to these categories up to 1939 should be included some of the key members (more especially such pillars of the publication as Andrew Rothstein, Clemens Dutt, Allen Hutt and Hugo Rathbone) of our Editorial Board which functioned effectively throughout all these years, continuing right up to the present period with the participation of Andrew Rothstein and Clemens Dutt, Hugo Rathbone until his deeply mourned death in 1969, and with additional representatives such as the honoured participation of D. N. Pritt.

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Category B	Bell, Figgins, Gallacher, Gollan, Gossip, Hannington, Hardie, Ted Hill, Horner, Moffatt, Papworth, Pollitt, Reeves, Rust, Scott, Shanley, Sinfield, Zak.
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Category F	Bevan, Brailsford, Cole, Cox, Cripps, Gaster, Laski, Lewis, Shields, Zilliacus.
Category G	Ainley, Groves, Jackson, Levy, Mahon, Pritt, Dr. Janet Vaughan.

In January 1933 the National Workers' Socialist Party, the Nazis, headed by Adolph Hitler, seized power in Germany and began the systematic extermination of trade unions, political parties and other organisations of the working class. In the streets and squares the works of Marx and all progressive writers were hurled upon bonfires—to which an immediate answer from the labour movement here was the creation of the Marx Memorial Library.

But already the depth of the abyss had been plumbed here with the débâcle of 1931-32. An upward movement against the danger of war and fascism was under way. The great hunger marches of the unemployed, the mounting revolt against the means test, the defeat of Mosley and his dupes, the miners' 'two bob' in 1935 with their thirteen to one majority for a national strike, were some of the multiplying signs of new life and activity. Then came the fascist rebellion of the butcher Franco backed by Hitler and Mussolini against the democratically elected Government of Spain. The *Daily Worker*, then five years old, printed in mid-July 1936 Pollitt's clarion call for national and international action to which the soundest elements in the labour movement responded, gave help to the utmost of their power and formed the International Brigade.

James Maxton, Fenner Brockway and other leaders of the Independent Labour Party, now severed from the Labour Party, joined in a United Front with the Communist Party and the Socialist League of Stafford Cripps, Aneurin Bevan, Ellen Wilkinson and many outside parliament, while the weekly *Tribune* was launched with William Mellor as editor. The United Front Committee met weekly with the participation of Cripps and Bevan for the Socialist

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League, Maxton and Brockway for the ILP, and Pollitt and Dutt for the Communist Party.

The United Front was to build up a militant resistance in the trade union and labour movement to the inroads of monopoly capitalism. From 1935 onwards, up to within a few months of the outbreak of war, this United Front, nationwide agitation put new life into what had seemed the decadent official constituents of the Labour Party. *Labour Monthly* became effectively part of this United Front not only in its contents but in the series of *Labour Monthly* Conferences, whose delegates might be called the cream of the labour movement.

Then came the fateful year 1938 when the Hitler-appeasement policy of the Tory Neville Chamberlain, with the support of the right-wing leaders of Labour, ended in the catastrophic disgrace of the Munich conspiracy, crowning the formation of the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo axis. Already in 1937 war had begun upon China: it was now less than twelve months away in Europe. Many of the most distinguished episodes of the whole history of *Labour Monthly* were during this period, through its exposure month by month of the whole character of the Chamberlain Munichite policy and the accuracy of its predictions.

BOOKS

The Hungry Half
Idris Cox
Lawrence & Wishart, 124 pp., 75p

THE CONTENTS of this valuable study are a veritable armament, bristling with facts on the world monopolist exploitation of the underdeveloped 'Third World': the world of new politically independent states in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, the republics of Central and South America, and the remaining 70 colonies. The book's thorough study of the economic design and disorder of capitalist foreign investment, both private and state, in the underdeveloped countries, shows how the extraction of monopolist profits far exceeds the misnomer of 'aid' which the exploiting capitalist states pretend to extend to the Third World.

Amongst many facts, the author spotlights one of special interest to British workers. Of 300 top companies in Britain, the first ten extracted £1,327.3 million in profit during 1968 from the Third World, while the total book value of overseas private capital assets in 1968 was £13,555 million, and this excludes Government assets. The market value of these private assets alone is probably about £17,000 million, and every year the British monopolists increase this total by around £450 million, because the profits drawn from the Third World for this investment is two-fifths more than what this capital would bring in profits if it were invested in Britain. This explains why British industry and productivity does not expand, and lags more and more behind every

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other industrial country. It is not because of high wages, but because of unreplaced, antiquated industrial equipment and organisation which has long since paid for itself. When the workers strike for living wages this is called 'against the public interest', but apparently investing capital abroad which is much needed in Britain—this is not considered 'against the public interest'!

Idris Cox contrasts the large and very real aid and assistance rendered to the Third World by the Soviet Union and the socialist states, as against the phoney profit-making 'aid' of the capitalist world, which allocates its aid to the production of primary products—raw materials—received by the capitalists at low prices and returned as finished goods at very high prices. His chapter on the 'Way Forward' for the Third World is excellent for the rich detail into which the author goes. In discussing the way forward the author correctly states that the basic solutions to their problem must rest with the peoples of the countries of the Third World, many of whom in trying to enlarge the public sector of production are directing their efforts on a path which opens the way forward.

In his final chapter the author indicates how great advantages could accrue to the British people if Britain strengthened its economic relations with the underdeveloped countries rather than joining the Common Market, membership of which would reduce the economic standards of the British people.

The book has an excellent series of appendices showing the gross national products of the capitalist countries and those of the Third World and showing contrasts in growth economy from 1960/62 to 1968 as well as other useful material.

SID DOUGLAS

The Case for Change in the EETU/PTU

Flashlight (Central Books), 24 pp., 10p

THIS NEW BOOKLET produced by *Flashlight*, the EETU/PTU rank-and-file paper, is essentially about the fight for democracy in the Electrical Electronic Telecommunication Union/Plumbing Trades Union. The pamphlet's main theme is an analysis of the 'debasement of democracy' in the union and the consistent development toward a highly bureaucratic centralised leadership. It also details the negotiating policies of the executive which have been rejected by the union's industrial conferences. It deals with the increasing isolation over the past few years in the councils of the TUC as a result of the extreme right-wing policies of the Executive Committee. The pamphlet is a powerful argument for democratic trade unionism, of special interest to electricians and plumbers but also worth reading by all trade unionists interested in the present struggles against the Tory Government's policies.

C.W.

The Debate on Workers' Control

Bert Ramelson, Ken Coates, Tony Topham, Charlie Swain, Bill Jones
The Institute for Workers' Control, 60 pp., 30p

THIS BOOKLET is a reprint of a useful discussion on the possibilities and limitations of 'workers' control' that was opened up in the columns of *Marxism Today* by Bert Ramelson and contributed to by Ken Coates, Tony Topham, Charlie Swain and Bill Jones. The discussion clarified a number of important aspects and differences relating to the problem of how far one can get 'workers' control' within the framework of capitalism and what it is worth.

JULIE JACOBS

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Soviet Jews: Fact and Fiction
Novosti Press Agency, 48 pp.
AT A TIME when the current deluge of cold war propaganda is especially concentrating on the allegations of anti-semitism in the Soviet Union this pamphlet is timely. The special trick of the anti-Soviet and anti-communist propagandists is to treat condemnation of Zionism as equivalent to anti-semitism. On the contrary: the entire official socialist movement before 1914 condemned Zionism as a counterpart of anti-semitism (treatment of Jews as aliens in the countries where they are born and bred) and the old Socialist International refused to accept affiliation of Poale Zion and other Zionist 'socialist' organisations. This pamphlet gives the historical background of the Jews in Russia, their oppression under Tsarism and the ending of the pogroms and their winning of freedom by the victory of the socialist revolution. A supplement covers the questions commonly asked in the West and the answers. The pamphlet is issued without indication of price; copies can be obtained from the Secretary, Soviet Embassy, Kensington, London. The pamphlet deserves to be put on the market at a price; it would undoubtedly reach a wider public in this way, as it would find a ready sale to a public which is apt to regard with scepticism any free literature as a publicity hand-out instead of as the serious contribution to informed discussion which this pamphlet in fact provides. P.D.

CORRESPONDENCE:
Give the Railwaymen a Fair Deal
I DO NOT BLAME Bob Bonnar (*LM*, December 1970) for being able to use only the word 'countless' with reference to what the Beeching policy has cost us. It is time we could say just what that cost has been. It is probable that in absolute terms urban areas have lost more than rural areas; and it is probable that rural areas have a greater loss in relative terms.

Wounds heal, after their fashion. Where limbs have been lopped from trees, the outer layers grow around and over the bare places. We may believe that the subsequent growth of trees is stunted and distorted. It is open to suspicion that there is a comparison here with rural society.

When the sixties opened, I could reach almost anywhere in Cornwall at a station or by a walk from one. Today there are few lines, many fewer stations; walking would often be out of the question. Some of us would remember a book, written by Wilkie Collins, about Cornwall in the middle of the last century, called *Rambles Beyond Railways*. Buses become more and more elusive.

Depopulation is the result of many factors but the Beeching policy was an unnecessary addition amongst them, a heartless and deliberate calculation of balance sheets with many undertones about submergence of that which occupied more attention to keep barely afloat than patience—or the higher rates of return elsewhere—would grant.

Decades count so much at this late hour in history. If we have socialism in only the next decade, it may be irrelevant to restore the pattern as it was. Nevertheless country people do still voice the idea of reopening railways when they are in more determined moods. There is another kind of retrenchment which socialists will consider when they are healing the schism between the town and the country.

In the 1950 election I lived in the Radnor part of the Brecon and Radnor parliamentary division, forty miles

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from the mass of the population who elected a Labour candidate perpetually to the chagrin of areas like mine where the political environment was almost totally Tory, indeed terroristically so (we walked over the mountain to avoid the real risk of leaving a car outside a meeting in a small rural school). It was the railwaymen, signal box by signal box, station by station —where are those things now?—who were islands of Labour organisation.

The countryside has often been an Achilles heel of popular government, in crisis isolating the towns by its vast intervening acres. The Beeching policy has drawn a few of the teeth which railway lines scattered in the country. The texture which socialism will create in rural society will end one of the more objectionable aspects of traditionalism for ever.

ROYSTON GREEN
Cornwall

HALLMARK OF SOLIDARITY

OUR readers have surpassed themselves this year for the second month running; our January figures below are for contributions received before the struggle against the Post Office took the form of strike action. News, as we go to press, is of the labour movement's donations to the postmen's hardship fund—out of the same staunch solidarity that is the hallmark of our own donors.

Nicola Seyd

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Society, Schools and Humanity, Douglas Holly. MacGibbon & Kee, 158 pp., £1.90.

Respectable Radical, F. M. Leventhal. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 276 pp., £3.

Moscow-Stalingrad: 1941-1942, Progress Publishers (Central Books), 278 pp., 90p.

The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, CMEA Secretariat, Moscow (Central Books), 108 pp., 60p.

Labour Radical, Len De Caux. Beacon Press (available on order from Collets), 558 pp., $15.00.

The Problem of Money, R. S. J. Rands. The Social Credit Party, 56 pp., 30p.

Carr's Bill—And How to Kill It, Bert Ramelson. Communist Party, 24 pp., 7½p.

Tory War on the Unions, O. H. Parsons. Labour Research Department, 32 pp., 10p.

Tussy is Me, Michael Hastings. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 430 pp., £2.

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